

NAME: Ishii, Oai DATE OF BIRTH: 4/29/1896 PLACE OF BIRTH: Hiroshima
Age: 78 Sex: F Marital Status: W Education: 8 yrs & 3 yrs of Women's high school

PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: 12/1914 Age: 18 M.S.P.B. Port of entry: San Fran.
Occupation/s: 1. Housewife/Dressmaker 2. Drug store owner 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. Sacramento, Ca. 2. _____ 3. _____
Religious affiliation: Buddhist Church, later Christian Church
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:


Name of assembly center: Walerga Assembly Center
Name of relocation center: Tule Lake, Ca. & Topaz, Utah
Dispensation of property: storage of own drug store Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. Nurse (in Topaz) 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: Salt Lake City, Utah

POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: November 1945
Address/es: 1. Sacramento, California 2. _____
3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian Church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe Date: 4/2/74 Place: Sacramento, Ca.

Translator: Layko Hernandez



NAME: Mrs. Oai Ishii

AGE: 78

DATE OF BIRTH: 1896

PLACE OF BIRTH: Hiroshima Ken

YEAR OF ENTRY INTO THE USA: 1914, 18 years old

MAJOR OCCUPATION: House wife of a pharماسist

CAMP: Tule Lake and Topaz

DATE OF INTERVIEW: Oct. 3, 1974

PLACE OF INTERVIEW: Sacramento

INTERVIEWER: Heihachiro Takarabe

TRANSLATOR: Tayeko Hernandez

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Q: Sansei and Yonsei (The third and fourth generation Japanese Americans) don't know very much about you Issei, don't they.

A: Oh, so you are going to make an Issei History.

Q: Yes, that's right. About their experiences and

A: hardships they have had.

A: Hardships, that's all Issei have experienced.

Q: This is for having Sansei and Yonsei listen to by making it as a record.

A: I think that to do such a thing is very hard, since Issei are not good at English and have to use Japanese. If Issei spoke in Japanese, Sansei and Yonsei could could not understand us. This is the difficult problem.

Q: I am going to ask questions, so please answer me. Please tell your name first.

A: My name is Oai Ishii.

Q: How do you write in Japanese letters?

A: It is written in Kanji (Chinese Characters) like this. 石井 緒 愛 I'm not sure which came first in this country, family name or first name. In Japan family names come first, which we say first names first in America.

Q: Does this Chinese character "O" (緒) mean to "to tighten"?

A: No, it doesn't. It means "the beginning" or the "Start". This letter "ai" (愛) means "love".

Q: Thank you very much. Where is your home town?

A: Hiroshima Prefecture.

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born on April 29, 1896. I shall be 78 years old pretty soon. Since the date 29th hasn't come yet, I am still 77 years old.

Q: What kind of family was yours?

A: My parents were rather educated for those of Issei, and contributed greatly to their hometown. My father has been the president of the town for a long time and done a great deal for the town.

Q: What was your father doing? Was it his job to be the president?

A: No. As you know, in Japan, he owned some land, and had some workers to work on it. When he was needed, he always went out to do the business for the town. In those days, we didn't work all the time, and so did my father. He went out wherever he was called for.

Q: What kind of man was your father?

A: Well, we, the children, were awed at our father.

He was a man of few words, yet he knew everything. My mother was so soft and affectionate, so I felt very easy and relaxed with her, while my father was strict enough not to forgive what was wrong. Yes, he was a man of those days, very stern and strong-minded, yet very silent.

Q: Do you have any memory of him when you were with your father?

A: Yes, I do. He had some hobbies, and was very good at calligraphy. He used to enjoy this at home. He was a silent man, but very thoughtful and attentive to the children.

Q: Have you ever been scolded by him?

A: No, I have never.

Q: Do you remember anyplace that your father took you to?

A: I seldom went out with him. However, he had been to America. When I was little, around the time of Russo-Japanese War, he had been to this country for 3 years. Then he came back and began to work for the town staying at home. He was quite a modern man, exposed to a civilized atmosphere of the foreign country in earlier days. He knew both English and Japanese quite well. For a person in those days, he was quite modern, and the people of

the town often visited him to ask various things. At that time, people used to say, "Please write in Yoko-moji (letters written in lateral lines)," which meant "Please write in English." I heard these conversation when I was little, and still remember this. Being a man of old times, he was able to read those difficult Chinese Poetry; Huhachi-shi or Daishi, in other words, he was versed in Chinese classical literature. Therefore we the children were awed at him when he was at home, although he was a silent person, and used to take a cup of tea or tabacco to him nervously. When we tool something to him, I used to be the one that was asked to do so by my mother since I was a girl. Anyway, he was a man of few words, and never scolded anyone.

Q: How many children did your parents have?

A: Well, I had 4 brothers and sisters, but two of them are already passed away.

Q: What was your position from the eldest among your brothers and sisters?

A: I had one elder brother. Then I was born the next as the eldest daughter. Then comes two daughters, and theYoungest was a boy. That is the eldest and the youngest were boys and the middle of the three were daughters, and I was the eldest of the three daughters. At present, only three of us are living.

Q: Are they all in Japan?

A: Yes, they are. They are my elder brother and younger sister. And here I am alone abroad. My younger brother is dead, and the next younger sister died in the pursuit of her duties. She had been a teacher for a long time, and on a day of commencement, she took her students to a school excursion. When they were on a sightseeing boat on a lake in a National Park, the boat was wrecked and 9 of them were killed, including my sister and her daughter. A statue in memory of them was set up in the Park, and I visited it the last time when I went to Japan.

Q: You mean your father was also killed in the accident?

A: No, my sister and her only daughter, who just graduated the school and went on the school excursion together with her mother, were both killed. Being a responsible teacher, she rescued as many students as possible on the sinking boat until she drowned with her daughter. The Department of Education honored her for her pursuing her duties. The reports and the papers on her death as a martyr to duty were sent to me from Japan. Sorry to say that we burnt all those things including the testimonial for fear of inspection and arrest, because the World War II was about to break out then. Anyway, my sister died in the pursuit of her duties.

Q: These questions can be divided into 4 sections; first they are about you in Japan, which I am now asking you, secondly about the time you came to America, thirdly about the time of depression, and then about the campong time and also about returning about returning from the Camp.

Q: What kind of mother was yours?

A: She was a very very tender and nice mother, although I couldn't treat my children like she did as a mother, because I thought her way just impossible to follow.

Q: How was she?

A: Tender and affectionate was she. She never scolded her children. In those days in the country, children seldom went to the bad, so parents didn't have to scold so often. Anyway, it was just impossible for me to be a mother like her, and I couldn't help scolding my children when they did something bad. The people in those days were just something else. They were patient indeed.

Q: Would you give some examples of how she raised her children?

A: Well, she did with her whole heart. She cooked meals for us with care. There was her lesson hour for children, and in the hour, she taught me how to behave as a girl and some other things.

Q: What kind of things did she teach you?

A: Well, to girls, she often taught manners to follow as a girl. "Prepect your elders," "Have repect to others," or "Be modest," she used to teach us these things.

Q: Did the lessons do any help later in your life?

A: Yes, they sure did. Born as the eldest daughter, I was supposed to leave the house to marry. Therefore I used to be advised and taught manners. When somebody visited our house, my mother prepared to serve tea for him. And If he was a guest of my father, she always told me to take the tea to him since I was the eldest daughter. When I didn't behave properly, she told me how I should have behaved after the guest was gone; "Today you opened Karakami (a paper sliding door) standing. That's wrong. When you go to a guest, you first put the tray on the floor beside you and then open the Karakami with a knee on the floor." Of course, the manners were old fashined, and I was trained these manners. The kimono I wore were all made by my mother. She has done everything for us with love. I think she liked to do this kind of things and it was her hobby to weave. She herself designed patterns and wove. Then she used to say, "For this coming festival, I'm going to make you haori (a kind of Kimono cardigan)," made me one, and dressed me. We, the children, were so happy about this.

I clearly remember that she often did this kind of things for us. Whenever some event happens like festivals, we wore new and hand-made kimono, and made our neighbor children envious. In this way, my mother did us a lot. Being the eldest daughter, I always wore new kimono, which my younger sisters sometimes had to wear handed-down kimono from me. We used to do like this in our days although I don't know what they do now. This way, I was raised with full of love of my parents and came to America with no hardships at all.

Q: How far did you go to school?

A: I only graduated from Jogakko (a women's high school).

Q: How many years for Jogakko education?

A: For 3 years.

Q: How many years did you go to school before Jogakko?

A: For 8 years.

Q: So 3 years of Jogakko came after 8 years-education. There were very few people who could go to Jogakko at that time, I hear.

A: Yes, relatively few people went to the school in the country.

Q: What do you remember about the school?

A: I took general subjects. And for optionals, I took manners and sewing, since it was a women's school. I don't think I learned flower arrangement at school

Q: What were the general subjects? History or something like that?

A: Mathematics and Japanese language and others. I took English, for I knew I was going to come to America. But this didn't do any good, because being an optional subject, it was only one hour a week. Worse thing was that I was not so ambitious nor interested in English, being young. I rather liked the other optional subjects better. Today, English is not an optional subject, I hear. When I was a student in Japan, it was optional and we could take if interested in it.

Q: How were the teachers at that time?

A: Being a women's school, the school had quite a few women teachers. Men were mainly in the other positions, such as the principal. Optional subjects only for women were usually taught by women.

Q: In your school life, what kind of fun did you have?

A: Since the school was relatively close to my house, I went to the school and didn't live in. So my school life was not so exciting and every day I walked 2 miles to school and waled back home at a regular time.

Going back and forth between school and my house was my school life, which was different from living in a dormitory, especially on Sundays. But I enjoyed the school. They took us to various excursions, and I had a very good time.

Q: What kind of difficulties did you experience in Your school life?

A: Well, I don't quite recall any particular hardship, maybe because I didn't have so much experience of being in trouble. Let me see... Sometimes I didn't prepare enough for exams and was in trouble in answering the questions. But that's all, and nothing else have I experienced.

Q: Do you remember anything about wars, such as the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War?

A: During the Russo-Japanese War, I was very little, but already going to an elementary school. Holding a national flag of Japan, saying, "Japan won, and Russia lost!", we used to worship at a shrine of Ujigami-San (a tutelary god of the village.) After the war, we didn't do so much, but during the war, pupils and students visited shrines to pray for the victory so many times.

Q: What was the religion of your family?

A: It was Buddhism.

Q: Which one?

A: It was Zen-Shu (the Zen sect.) My mother was a devout Buddhist. In Japan, the first thing to do was to visit a family (Buddhist) altar, otherwise we can't have breakfast, and I did this, too. In this way, I was raised with the spirit of Buddhism before coming to this country.

Q: Had you heard about Christianity in Japan before you came here?

A: Yes, I had. When I was going to an elementary school, a missionary, who was a white man living in Hiroshima City, sometimes came to our town. He didn't come to our school, though. Although I didn't meet him personally nor listened to his sermon, I remember that I saw him from a distance.

Q: What sadness and happiness do you remember while you were young in Japan?

A: When I was attending school, I looked forward to the next day, and every day was my pleasure. Sometimes the school planned trips for us to Miyagima Island or somewhere not so far away from the school. I enjoyed these excursions very much.

Q: What was the happy memory while you were at home?

A: On such occasions as a festival of Ujigami-san of the village, or the New Year's Day, a big dinner with

a lot of gochiso (fabulous dishes) was prepared, and we received quite a few guests. I really enjoyed these events receiving guests, serving gochiso, and having it. When the guest was for my father, we the children didn't bother him and just took him a cup of tea or so. But on the occasion for the whole family such as a festival, we were so happy and excited. Sometimes I was too anxious for the day to sleep, counting how many more days to wait for.

Q: Do you remember any sad experiences?

A: We hadn't had any misfortune yet at that time, and my parents were well when I was there. I haven't had any hard time when I was a little girl. I spent my childhood too common and safe.

Q: Then it happened that you came to America. Why did this happen?

A: I am the one who came to America as a picture bride.

Q: How was this marriage arranged?

A: Ishii, my husband, sent a letter from America to his parents and asked to find his bride for him since he was intending to get married, I imagine. Then his parents came to my house to discuss about the letter. I vaguely remember, although I was so young, that they were talking about this with my father.

This was the start of arranging our marriage. In those days in Japan, we never thought about getting married through love romance. Marriages were arranged by parents, so was my marriage, and here I am in America. The persons concerned with the marriage, Ishii and myself, hadn't met before I came to America, because Ishii came to live here when he was very young while I was in Japan as a student. Anyway, this was how I got married, so young generation may not be able to understand this.

Q: How old were You?

A: The marriage had already arranged when I was still a student, but I waited until I became 18 years old because the people under 18 years old were not allowed to come to America. When I became 18, I came here.

Q: How old were you when your parents arranged your marriage?

A: I was only 16 or 17 years old when they were already talking about my marrying to Ishii. I was still attending school.

Q: The Ishii family and yours were friends?

A: No, we were relatives. Anyway, the marriage was in a sense, a marriage between my parents and his. They waited for me to get to 18 years old to have my name entered in the Ishii's family registrar,

and after this I came to America.

Q: So you hadn't met your future husband, Mr. Ishii, before the marriage, had you?

A: No, I had never. My husband, according to him, had met me before when I was very very little. He told me that he had seen me at some Ujigami-San festival, because we were relatives. Even so, I was too little to notice him or to know where he came from. According to him, when he came over to his grandmother's house to stay, I was also at her house, and he saw me then. I didn't know about this at all.

Q: How old was Mr. Ishii when he married you?

A: Let me see...how many years was he older than I? Well, I have to count now, otherwise I can't tell. Maybe he was 6 or 7 years older than I, I guess.

Q: Then your marriage wasn't so much different from us at the point of age difference. It is very rare that the difference in age of the Issei couple is only 6 years, isn't it. Usually, it was common that they had about 10 years of difference in age at that time.

A: Yes, he was 6 or 7 years older. If he were still alive, he should be 86 years old or so since I am now 77 years old.

Q: What image had you had about America before you came here?

A: I had never seen nor known about America before I came.

Q: Did you come here with a longing feeling for this country? Or you didn't like to leave Japan.

A: Since my parents told me to go to America, I did with some expectation. However, when I got here, I became homesick.

Q: So finishing the entry in the family register in Japan, you came to this country by yourself. When was this?

A: It was 1914 that I came here. It only took a week or so to become a new year (since I arrive here in December). Getting to this country, I often heard people saying "Christians" because it was the end of the year. I was too new to this country then. Soon the year 1915 came, when the World Exposition was held in San Francisco. I thought that it was a good idea to remember this year instead of 1914 as the year of my entry to this country. Although I got here in 1914, very soon 1915 arrived.

Q: What kind of people were on board when you were coming to America?

A: They were all coming to this country and very nice and friendly. Some were youth called for by thier parents, and there were quite a few picture brides, since it was the heyday of picture marriages at that time. In the boat, I got sea-sick and suffered very much. I guess it took 12 to 13 days by boat from Japan to America. The first 4 to 5 days, every body was on bed suffering from the sea-sick, after that we enjoyed the trip going on deck or so.

Q: What kind of fun did you have?

A: I was invited to a dinner by the captain and had gochiso (a dinner) with him. Getting well, I went on the deck and watched the Pacific Ocean. Of course the life on the boat was limited and we couldn't do everything. Some were sick all the time and unable to enjoy the life. Those who got well sometimes went up on deck or back to their room. The captain often invited the passengers to his room. The life on the boat was like this, and enjoyable.

Q: What port did the boat enter?

A: That was in San Francisco.

Q: Was there any physical examination or something?

A: At that time, we first went to the Angel Island, and were required various examinations and paper-work. Finishing these, we finally could land the country. By that time, the husbands of the picture-brides were there to meet their wife.

Q: Did they come to the Anglet Island?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you recognize him at once?

A: Yes, I did, because he gave me a sign. Then we had a formal Christian wedding, which, I thought, was a very wise thing to do. When we returned to a hotel from Angel Island, a pastor Zenzo Hirota was there waiting for us. He was a pastor of a Methodist Church in San Francisco, and was one of the oldest pioneer missionaries, you may not know him. He married us with the Bible, so I have a formal Marriage license.

Q: How did you feel when you met Mr. Ishii for the first time?

A: How did I feel? I don't know, coming here as a picture-bride.

Q: You met him here for the first time, didn't you?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Was he exactly what you had been imagining?

A: Yes, there was not so much difference between the person and the picture.

Q: Were you relieved? Or...

A: Since our families were relatives, there should be no room for doubt about him, therefore I was not worried about it at all. For those who were raised in Japan, it was natural to accept the marriage arranged by their parents, and I had been taught by them to establish a new life with patience when married. And after that, I began to have many hard times.

Q: Where did you go from San Francisco?

A: Finishing the wedding in San Francisco, I came to Sacramento with my husband where he had been living before. I have never moved to another place since I came here in Sacramento. I left Japan, got to San Francisco, then came to Sacramento, and have stayed here all the time until now. I have never moved to another town, except that I was relocated to a camp during the war. After the war, I returned to Sacramento again.

Q: What was he doing then?

A: He had a job then.

Q: What kind of job was it?

A: He was working for S.P.. In those days, it was the best days of train-stations, now it's declined though.

Q: Was that a canning company?

A: No, no. It was a train company. I think he was working at a white people's house when I got to America. Anyway, it was 50-something years ago, so I don't recall. One time, I remember, he was working for S.P. for a while. It was in Chinatown.

Q: What kind of life was waiting for you?

A: Coming to Sacramento from San Francisco, we stayed at Ishii's friend's house the night and the next day. Then the next day I was taken to a family of white people. Ishii was quite considerate. His idea was to put me in the family without salary in order to have me learn English and American customs and manners. He had already arranged everything for me to do so. I stayed at Ishii's friend's house for only one day, and the next day I already went to the white family to live in. So we started to live separately. This was the beginning of my homesick. Being an unpaid school-girl, I was treated just like their daughter by them. They had a 9 year-old son named Jack. The next day I started to go to learn English. There was a pastor at the Presbyterian Church whose name was Rev. Junzo Nakamura.

I went to this church to learn English for a long time. This family was German, and the wife was a musician. She used to play the grand piano from morning, ot have champagne parties at home inviting opera singers. I lived in the house unpaid as a school-girl to learn English and American customs. They really loved me and treated me as Jack's sister. Every day I went out to learn English. After I came home from school, I was taught how to do household works such as washing dishes. Being a musician, she wanted to teach me to play the piono. Every morning when I finished washing dishes after breakfast, she called me to the grand piano. However, my mind was far from playing the piano. I was regretting for coming to America. In Japan I had never dreamed of being a school-girl. He didn't even mention about this plan in his letter. She invited me to the piano and taught me to play it. On the contrary, I just didn't feel like learning. That was a big mistake. I could have learned to play the piano as much as I liked free. After dinner, every night, she told me to come over to her with an English book, and made me review the lesson I had received on that day. I really had a hard time. Now, I sometimes remember this and think that I was a person of few wants. I should have been more greedy. There was no such favorable place for us.

However, I myself didn't feel like learning. Seeing cherry blossoms and amaryllises bloom through the window, tears flew out of my eyes, and I used to cry a lot thinking of my parents' home. I really suffered. We had lived separately until we had the first son.

Q: How long was it?

A: About for three years. I have lived in the family for 3 years or so, while Ishii was working somewhere else by himself. Having the baby, I left the family and had our own home for the first time after three years in downtown, although it was a humble house. Before that I lived in this family. Every day I went to school to learn English, and when I came home, only setting table and washing dishes after dinner were what I did. They didn't have me cook, and they also had a German lady come to the house for doing household works. At night, I was told to come over to Mrs. in the parlor room and she taught me English. In the morning, she taught me the piano. Oh, I hated to do these things!

Q: Didn't you tell her that you didn't like it?

A: No, I didn't. When she called me saying, "Come on, come on," my English was not fluent enough to explain that I didn't feel like it, because I had just got from Japan. Sitting at the piano, saying

"Thank you," my mind was far from playing. This was the hard thing -- that I was unable to explain my feeling in English. Do you know a Japanese singer Miura who was famous for "Madam Butterfly" ?

Q: Yes. Tamaki Miura was her name.

A: In San Francisco, at the Opera House, she played "Madam Butterfly" in 1915. Being musicians, they used to go to see such famous operas or concert regardless of expense. They told me that they would take me with them to the opera by all means, but I didn't go just as I stubbornly refused my husband's proposal to take me to the World Exposition and troubled him a lot. The reason was my homesick. I was thinking that I rather wanted to go back to Japan than seeing such things. Really! It was very silly of me! but at that time I was very serious.

Q: How long have you been homesick?

A: During my living in the family. I used to cry, thinking of my parents' love, of the warm home life I had had in Japan. Who else put me in the family without salary? My husband asked them to teach me English and the manners and custom of this country, and refused their proposal to pay him. Therefore, my work in the house was not hard at all, just washing dishes and cleaning up the talble. If I had used this opportunity more usefully like today's

school girls, I should have become a finer person.

Q: How was the first impression of America?

A: I think that this country has its own history, and has gone through some brilliant events such as the Civil War during the President Lincoln's time, which I learned at school. Just like we bow at Niju-Bashi Bridge of the Imperial House in Japan, America has its own brilliant history such as George Washington and Lincoln I learned about. I thought this country had experienced notable things.

Q: What did you think about the White people?

A: Every white person I've met liked me very much. The family I lived with, who were the first white people I've met, loved me as if I had been their daughter. There was no racial discrimination in them. The wife got material, made me turn this way and that way to fit me, and made me all the clothes I wore to go to school. She dressed me the clothes she made and was happy just like any mother who was so happy to see her daughter wear the dress she made.

Q: At that time, you were about 18 to 19 years old, weren't you?

A: Yes, I had just become 18 years old then. Yes, she made me quite a few dresses, a pink one or a blue one. I still keep them all. Yes, she did me a lot.

Q: What was her name?

A: Pendagest. She was Mrs. Pendagest, and an artist and a musician. She played the piano extremely well.

Q: Are their children still living?

A: They had a son named Jack Pendagest who was 9 years old when I was there. He already grew up old.

When I meet my old friend, I ask about him, but I don't know if he is still living or not. His father is already dead. A report of his death was sent to me when we had our own house. His name was Gene Pendagest. I guess Mrs. Pendagest is already passed away. She was a German woman, rather big and tall, and played the grand piano very very well.

All the guests to the house were from the high society families. When they entertain them, they used very expensive things such as cut-glasses.

After the party, I had to clean up the things, so I didn't like the parties at all. I had to work very hard when a party was held. One time I broke a cut-glass when I was cleaning up. The floor of the kitchen was marble, so it was so easy for a glass to be broken when dropped. I suffered so much, thinking how to apologize for this to them with my poor English ability. I still remember the hard time I had at that time. Then my husband came to see me. I explained him about this and asked him to look for the same kind of the cut-glass to

Art Gallery. Anyway, we began to live in that big house. Upstairs was living the Takeda family of New Capital Fish Company. We lived downstairs, which was the first home we had. I think I have been blessed in many ways; Brought up by Buddhism in Japan since my parents were devotees, I came to this country and was married in Christianity by Rev. Hirota as soon as I landed, once I had my own house I offered it as a meeting place of church activities and Bible classes. First we sat on a bench since we didn't have a sofa, but I held the Bible classes every week as soon as I began to live in the house. In this way, I and religion were always together, and I thank for this.

Q: What was your husband doing then?

A: He was already preparing for his business.

Q: What kind of business was he going to start?

A: As a pharmacist. He came to America just after graduating from a junior high school, and lived in a family as a school-boy to study English. He lived in a white doctor's family in Woodland and graduated from a high-school there, I hear. After he married me, he took the State Board Examination of Pharmacist. He had to study very hard for the examination, having his family -- me and a child. At that time, we had the eldest son. This is the

make up for it. He explained this to the lady. Then she hugged me and kissed me, telling me why I had suffered so much from such a trifling matter. Yes, she really loved me, and I was so happy that she hugged me. I don't know if he could find the same kind of the glass or not, or if he apologized her for not being able to find it.

Q: Did you have any fun with them?

A: At that time around 1915, there were not so many families, even among the white people, that had a car. In the afternoon, they sometimes took me for a joy-ride to various places in the suburbs by their car. I enjoyed this ride very much. Being used to English and the American life after 2 or 3 years, I thought that I had a good time after the drive and thanked them. I was lucky to have been loved just as a member of the family by them.

Q: Then you left the family and moved to downtown?

A: We had our house downtown.

Q: Where was it?

A: First, it was 3rd street and between O and N Street. There was a Methodist Church on 4th and O Streets, wasn't there. Anyway, between O Street and N Street, there used to be a big 2-storied house. I'm afraid it is gone by now. It was close to an

picture of him.

Q: He is Dr. Ishii, isn't he?

A: No, this is his elder brother. I had two sons, this son and a younger one. This is the elder one. Having his own child, he decided to be a pharmacist, because he thought that it was not good for him to work for others any more. He studied very hard. Since I had to give him a chance of being a pharmacist, I didn't go out to attend meetings or some other activities.

Q: Did you work then?

A: No, I didn't, because I had a child. I just stayed home. Oh, I did a side job at home, I remember now.

Q: What kind of work was it?

A: Leaving the host family, I attended and graduated from a sewing school for myself while I was pregnant. After the child was born, I did a dress-making work at home, sewing dresses of others.

Q: Then did he have a job while he was studying?

A: He was studying in order to start a business.

Before, he was working and studying. Once he passed the examination of pharmacist, he could run his drug store without hiring a pharmacist. So we had a very hard time unlike those who are paid their

school expenses b y their parents nowadays.

Q: When did he pass the examination of pharmacist?

A: I guess it was around 1920, of course he had been working at the drug store before. I was doing the side work at home when this son was born, and he was working at the store.

Q: Was it his own store?

A: Yes, he owned it.

Q: What kind of store was it?

A: It was a drug store. Since he hadn't had a lisenche, he had hired a pharmacist before passing the exam.

Q: Was the pharmacist a Japanese?

A: Yes, he was a Japanese and graduated from U.C..
Having to manage the store, he went to the store every day. He studied really hard and finally passed the exam.

Q: What was the difficulty you have experienced at that time?

A: Difficulty? Let me see...

Q: You didn't have a financial difficulty, did You?

A: Both of us worked for our living. Expecting a baby, thinking that I should also work, I attended

a sewing school so that I could work at home. I made dresses at home, taking care of the baby.

Q: What was the name of the store?

A: It was "New Eagle Drug Store". We kept the store for a long time.

Q: Was it in downtown?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: Was the owner your husband?

A: At first, June Miyakawa's father was the owner. Then he was going back to Japan to live there after having succeeded in his business in America, he proposed to my husband of handing over the store to him. At that time, he had already had a plan of owning a drug store, so he bought the store from him. He was lucky for this.

Q: What had your husband been doing before that?

A: He had been getting ready for this direction -- a drug store.

Q: How long have you kept the drug store?

A: For almost 38 to 40 years since 1920.

Q: The war started in 1942.

A: At that time, 1942, we put everything away from the store, left it in a white persons's care,

and went to the Camp. After the war, we returned and opened the store again. So we did this drug-store business for almost 40 years totally.

Q: There was a depression period from 1930 to 1933. At that time, what happened to you and the store?

A: We were still keeping the drug store then. I recall that all the people were rushing to banks.

Q: Then your store didn't break, did it?

A: No. I heard the people saying that they were going to a bank to withdraw the money which was about to fail. But I don't remember that we went to a bank to get our money back.

Q: Do you remember anything during the depression period?

A: I don't know what happened to the store during that time, because I stayed home doing house work. I didn't hear about the difficulty of keeping the store during that time. Anyway, the store survived.

Q: Before the outbreak of the war, the relationship between Japan and America got worse and worse. Do you remember anything about this?

A: Yes, I remember the unfavorable atmosphere to us. Just before the outbreak of the war, my husband

took my son to Japan. He wanted his son see Japan since he had never visited it, so he planned to leave here on June twenty-something when the vacation began and returned on August 31 to San Francisco, totally 2 months trip to Japan. And they left for Japan. After that, bad news began to be reported morning and evening every day. Being left here alone to keep the drug store, hiring a pharmacist, I was in great trouble to think of how to deal with the store in case they couldn't come back from Japan. The relationship between Japan and America was getting worse to the worst and a war was about to break out. Not knowing what to do, I frequently went to a lawyer and had him call my husband in Japan to ask what to do. I had a very hard time then.

Q: By telephone?

A: Yes. Morning and evening, the possibility of the war was reported. I really had a hard time at that time, because I was the one that was keeping the store. Soon, they stopped people travel from Japan to America. I don't know what the lawyer did, but I asked him to make it possible for my husband to come back to America from Japan, and Ishii came back via Shan-hai by himself. The reason why I did this was that I couldn't keep nor clean up the store any more for myself.

Q: Oh, so boats from Japan stopped coming to America?

A: Yes. So my husband had to return via Shan-hai (a main port of Mainland China). The son he took with him to Japan, who was 25 years old then, caught a cold over there because of the unaccustomed weather. His cold developed into pneumonia, so my husband put him in the medical school of Okayama University. He couldn't wait for his son's recovery, because there was not a moment to lose and I needed him come home as soon as possible by all means. By the lawyer's arrangement, my husband came back via Shan-hai. He left his son in the hospital, providing him a special nurse to take special care of him. But the boy died in Japan on October 10.

Q: Oh, just before the outbreak of the war.

A: My husband had already got here by that day, October 10, because we had to put everything away from the store in case of a war breaking out. We had a very hard time then.

Q: What kind of management difficulty did you have?

A: Since the war was about to break out, it was very possible for the store to be confiscated because the owner was out of the country. Then it was clear that banks would freeze (our savings) and that I would become unable to keep the store nor make living. I was so much worried. So I left

everything to the lawyer and let him contact with my husband in Japan.

Q: Was the lawyer a Japanese?

A: No, he was a white man.

Q: What was his name?

A: Oh, I don't recall his name..., although I knew him well...

Q: Was he a good person?

A: Yes, he was. He was living an exclusive area, and a fine person. He helped me a great deal and did his best.

Q: Have you experienced any persecution from white people then?

A: No, personally I haven't.

Q: In the Sacramento Bee, a lot of bad things on Japanese people were written, weren't they?

A: Yes, I remember that, but as far as the management of the store was concerned, I haven't had bad experiences. They all supported me well.

Q: When did your husband arrived here?

A: It was just impossible for him to return from Japan soon, and finally, after all the possible efforts,

he found a way to come back which was via Shan-hai. Therefore it was around September, I guess, that he came back.

Q: August and September were the time that Japanese military was doing good, increasing its power.

A: Receiving a telegram of his arrival, I went to San Francisco to meet him. Later, we received another telegram that said that our son died there. It was on October 10. They couldn't send his ashes soon to us because of the war, but my family in Japan kept them during the war.

Q: How did you feel about his death?

A: Then my younger son advanced into Japan; a military hospital of Saitama Prefecture, as a soldier of the Occupation Forces. When he was coming back to America, he visited my family and brought back the ashes with him to me.

Q: You must be sad to hear your eldest son's death.

A: Yes. I couldn't believe it, because I couldn't see his death with my eyes. When my husband and he were leaving for Japan, I saw them off from the front yard, saying "Good Bye," and that was the last I saw him. We had paid all his school expenses, and he was about to work.

Q: What did he study?

A. He graduated from Stanford University, then graduated from Loyola Medical School, and he could have become a doctor with one-more-year service of internship. Since he had just graduated the medical school on that year, my husband thought of making a trip to Japan, taking his son with him to show his mother country. This way, we had him have 8-year university education, and only one-year internship was left to be a doctor. And he died. Everything we did for him proved to be nothing. But I thank God for his supporting me until now. Without knowing Him, I would have been miserable. We, my husband and I, worked very hard to have our son had best education, praying for his being a fine person, in vain. Nobody could understand our feeling unless he had the same experience. The school expenses of Stanford was quite expensive. We worked very hard to send the money to him. Graduating from the University, he was admitted by two universities, one was Loyola and the other was in the East. He picked Loyola, considering that he could save both time and money more, graduated it, went to Japan, got sick and died there. We brought him up for 25 to 26 years, and these years turned into nothing. We lost everything.

Q: Just after his death, Pearl Harbor was attacked by

Japanese military in Descenber. How did you feel then?

A: It was Sunday, and I was attending a Church Service. So I heard this news at Church. At the night, we heard on radio quite a few Japanese names who were arrested. At 12:30 am, when I was thinking of turning off the radio to go to bed, a front bell rang and men from Washington D.C. came in and asked me if this was the residence of Ichiro Ishii. I answered "Yes," and went to my husband to tell this. He was already sleeping by that time. Anyway, he was lucky enough not to be arrested.

Q: Was he taken to any place then?

A: No.

Q: Did the man just ask questions?

A: Yes. Two men came.

Q: How long did they stay there?

A: No, not so long. He got up from the bed, put on a bath robe, and met them. They didn't take him away, but ordered to close the store.

Q: Did they order soon after this?

A: Yes. Because my husband had been out of the country. So we couldn't keep the store any more.

Q: Did you have to close the store soon?

A: I think the order to close the store was sent the next morning.

Q: Then what happened?

A: We couldn't run the store.

Q: What did they do with the goods?

A: They didn't touch the goods at the store. Then we had to leave the place. I remember it was in April or May that we moved. Since we arranged everything about the goods and the store before leaving the place, they didn't touch anything of our property. But a guard used to sit down in the store every day. Anyway, it was a long time ago, almost 30 to 40 years ago. After the war, returning from the Camp, we reopened our store putting back the goods which had been put away.

Q: You received an order of relocation, didn't you?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: How did you know that you had to move?

A: Well, there was a Japanese society in Sacramento, and the relocation order was made to all the Japanese people. And all of us in Sacramento moved at one time. We put away our things or entrusted them to White persons and left Sacramento.

Q: Did you entrust a White person with your things?

A: No. Since we had a storage at the back of the store, we put our luggages in it and left the town.

Q: Was anything in the storeage stolen?

A: Yes. Quite a few things were lost when we came back, because some years had passed.

Q: Was the store yours?

A: Yes. The ownership was ours. We entrusted the store to a White person during the war, and was going to open the store again after we came back. While we were in Tule Lake, this white man wrote to us that a Filipino wanted to rent our store to open a grocery store and that he was going to lend it to the Filipino. Since we had entrusted him with the store, we didn't have a right to refuse it. When we returned from the camp, the Filipino was still running a grocery store at our place, we could not put our goods back from the storeage. We had to wait until they moved or find another place to reopen our drug store.

Q: Was the Filipino paying rent to you?

A: Yes, I think so. He might have been paying to the White person whom we entrusted. We were enemy aliens at that time, so we had to entrust our store to the White persons. When we found a place to open our store again and was putting back to new

place, we found that some of the goods wh had left in the storage werestolen. It was very easy to find out. We found a place very close from the former place to reopen our store so that we didn't have to have too much trouble to move the goods to the new place. We had to have a carpenter make the new place suitable for selling drugs. Mr. Yamasaki did this work for us. We had a hard time to reopen our drug store.

Q: Did you go to Tule Lake first?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you go there directly?

A: No. First, I went to Assembly Center, Walerga, in North Sacramento. It was a temporary Camp, and we went there in May and left there around September. Then we went to Tule Lake.

Q: When you entered the Camp of Walerga, how did you feel?

A: My mind was calm since I knew we, as enemy aliens, couldn't do anything at all. I had made up my mind that I had to bear difficulties I was going to have. Do you know the houses of the Camp? I think you do. Oh, maybe you don't. Anyway, everything was poor. We had to wait in line to get our meals, which was the first experience to me.

Q: Did you feel miserable when you had to wait in line to get food?

A: Yes, I did. But knowing that this hard treatment was done to not a few of us but the whole Japanese people in America because of the war gave me strength to bear the situation.

Q: What did you do with your house?

A: Since the storage at the back of our store was very big, we also put some of the furniture of our house in the storage, I think.

Q: In the Camp, you had to live in a shack house. How was it?

A: There were beds for us and a parlor in it. That's all. However, we didn't have to cook, and we just went to a place to have a meal. All we did was to take an electric tea-pot to the place to make tea.

Q: Were you much inconvenienced there?

A: Yes, I suffered great inconvenience.

Q: How were your children? Were they already grown up?

A: Since my eldest son was dead in Japan, I had just one son left. This boy had just graduated from a high school when we were entering the Camp of Walerga, so the diploma was sent to this camp. He didn't experience the camp life at all since I had already

arranged things for him to go to a University.

Q: So he went to the University at once?

A: I recall that he hardly experienced a camp life at Tule Lake. He left for the University soon after we got in. He was the third person who left the Camp.

Q: What university did he go to?

A: He was admitted to Denver University. He was easily admitted, so he left the Camp at once. When I was in a hospital in Tule Lake seriously injured, he came to the hospital to say good-bye to me before leaving for Denver University. I remember that we felt a great tug at parting, crying.

Q: How were you injured?

A: When I was taking a shower, I slipped and fell in the bathroom. Finishing the shower, I was going to the place where my clothings were. There was a doorsill between the shower and the place, and I stumbled over the doorsill and fell, and had my ankle broken seriously. They cemented my ankle and kept me in a hospital for a long time. I had to use a stick to walk.

Q: In the Assembly Center of Walerga, where too many

people were put in a small place, various troubles could have happened. Did any trouble happen there?

A: Having only one boy, I didn't have to experience such troubles there. He came back punctually, so I didn't have to worry about him where he went.

Q: Before entering the Camp, did you have any had experience from White people?

A: No, I didn't at all. Having lived in one place for a long time, having done my best for the people regardless of different races, I didn't experience such a bad thing from them at all.

Q: You were asked if you were loyal to this country or not, weren't you?

A: I thought that I had to love and be loyal to the country where I was living, because I once left Japan deciding to live in America. So I sometimes talked to my child what I thought when we were having dinner. "Living in this country and having education here, you should be loyal to this country," I told him. I thought this was necessary, otherwise he wondered what or how he should think about this.

Q: There were quite a few people who got angry at the fact that they were put in a Camp despite of being American Citizens. What did you think about them?

A: It was undoubtedly unfair that, they treated us very bad putting in the Camp despite of being American citizens. But I was greatly moved to hear that CC Unit of Nisei performed distinguished services. Anyway, this was a complicated and difficult matter.

Q: Didn't you get angry?

A: Under such situation, we couldn't do anything by a few people's anger. Therefore, there was no way but religion that we could live with; trusting ourselves to God and living according to His will was the only way for us. We couldn't do anything for ourselves--being mere human beings.

Q: In the Camp, an order to let Nisei go to the war was issued. About the half of the people in the Tule Lake Camp opposed to this. Some got mad saying never to volunteer, some said they could go. What did you think about this?

A: I didn't feel the problem so serious personally since my child had gone to school, although I sometimes heard a rumor that that person was for Washoi-Washioi Gumi (demonstrating anti-government group).

Q: When you were in the Camp, what kind of pleasure or hobbies did you have?

A: Hobbies I started in the Camp is still mine. A friend of mine asked me to join a tanka (Japanese poems of thirty-one syllables) club. I had never done it nor wanted to do it, but this person whom I knew in the camp and made friends with insisted on my joining it, and I started it. While I was joining the activity, I found my interest rising. I also went to a flower arrangement class very often when I was there. (We used Sagebrush for an arrangement.) My hobbies are by-product of living in the Camp. Flower-arrangement was very popular at that time there. We were taught it very earnestly.

Q: Did you stay in Tule Lake until the war was over?

A: No, we were moved to another Camp from Tule Lake after one year or less.

Q: Which Camp did you go?

A: I went to Topaz since an order to move to Topaz was issued to us.

Q: How was the Camp in Topaz?

A: It was all right.

Q: How was it compared with Tule Lake?

A: They were much the same. Topaz was also in the desert, and there was a church very close from the Camp, just across the street where the shack was. It was very convenient for us to go to church. A canteen was also very close. So it was rather convenient.

Q: What kind of work did you do in the Camp?

A: I worked as a nurse of a nursery in the Camp. To get this job, I had to go to the Administration office to take an examination. I wasn't so serious in looking for a job although our bank froze the money and we had to pay our son's school expenses. Kindly enough, a friend of mine recommended this job to me. I was not sure if I had that ability, but I wished to get the job. I thought that even a part-time job would do. At that time, they paid 19 dollars which was the highest, 16 dollars for a usual job and only 8 dollars for a part-time work. Wishing to get a job, even a part-time job, I went to the Administration Office. They asked me whether I was Issei or Nisei. I answered that I was a Issei. They told me that they were going to give me a job since my understanding English was enough to answer the question. In this way I helped at the nursery in Topaz with another Japanese lady.

Q: Didn't you do anything in Tule Lake?

A: I didn't work because I was seriously injured there.

I couldn't even go out to have meals all the time

I was there. My leg was firmly fixed by cement.

By the time when the cement was taken away from my

leg and I became able to walk, we were moved to

Topaz. So, I got a job in Topaz.

Q: What else do you remember about the experience in Tule Lake and Topaz?

A: I realized that this was a good chance for me to learn, so I earnestly learned flower arrangement and participated in the Tanka Club activities.

I also participated in church activities, such as prayer group, worship services and visiting people at hospitals. I belonged to the choir of the church and practiced songs since the church was very near. There were quite a few fine leaders, who taught the choir very hard, such as Rev. Ozaki in Fresno whom you know and Rev. Shimada who is now back in Japan.

Q: Did you have any difficulties or a hard time in the Camp?

A: No, I didn't so much, because we didn't have to cook our meals. We just went to the place to eat. When I was injured my leg, I suffered a little bit because I couldn't move. Anyway, I didn't feel difficulties because everyone was put in the same

situation.

Q: When did you get out of the Camp?

A: I got out of the Camp earlier than usual before the Topaz Camp was closed. My husband had already to a job when we were in Tule Lake and had already left the Camp, because he had to earn money to pay our son's school expenses. Since the money at our bank was frozen because he had been to Japan before, he had to work. Thus he went to Salt Lake City earlier to work at the Pharmacy Department of L.D.S. Hospital. I also worked in Topaz to earn my son's school expenses. Since my husband who had been working in Salt Lake City for a while told me to go out of the Camp and come to him, I left the Camp earlier than it was closed. I wasn't intending to get a job in Salt Lake City. Knowing that the city was famous for Mormon, I left a hotel to look around the city. When I was strolling, I saw a big sign hung from a window of a tailor shop which was saying, "need a worker." I was bold enough to enter the shop to get the job instead of sightseeing the city. "This shop needs a worker, maybe I can ask what kind of a job it is," I thought. Going up quite a few steps, I found myself in the President room. I explained him that I saw the sign and asked if he got any job for me. At once, I got the job there. I worked there until we came back to Sacramento to reopen the drug store.

Q: How many years have you worked?

A: No, I didn't work so long. I worked for 6 months to one year, and came back to Sacramento.

Q: Was the war already over when you returned to Sacramento?

A: Yes, it was. That's why we came back to Sacramento to open the store again. Thus we both left the Camp and worked in Salt lake city for a While. My husband worked at the hospital, while I worked at a big men's tailor shop named Fulman Tailor Shop. There, about 300 women were working, making suits. Among them, only 3 were Japanese. Luckily enough, I got the job and was told to come to that place two days later with my social security card by the President. I had never worked before, so I didn't have the card. For the first time in my life, I went to the place in Salt Lake City to get the card, and went to the shop to work. I continued this job until we came back to Sacramento. Mr. Holiday of the shop liked us and treated us nice without rejecting Japanese. He asked me how long I would visit Sacramento. Wishing to hold this job in case we couldn't reopen our business in Sacramento, I just told him that I wanted 10 days leave of absense to go to Sacramento, and left the city. In my mind, I was thinking that I would never come back to the city since we were to open our business. But who

knows? Especially in those days. Therefore, I left the shop holding my job. Luckily, we didn't have to go back to Salt Lake City again, and we started the store in Sacramento.

Q: In what year did you come back to Sacramento?

A: We came back here in 1945 when the war was over.

Q: The war was over in August.

A: When the war was over, Salt Lake City was in a festival mood, and we were still there. Anyway, we came back here within that year.

Q: Were they celebrating the end of the war in Salt Lake City?

A: We were living on the third floor of a hotel in downtown, and we could hear fire-works and joyous voices of the people from our room. I was before the Thanksgiving Day when we returned to Sacramento, in early November of 1945.

Q: You didn't have any place to live in, did you?

A: No, we didn't. We found a temporary place to live in.

Q: Where was it?

A: It was 4th and O street.

Q: Oh, you could find a house to live in?

A: Yes, we could, although it was a temporary house.

The first thing we had to do before reopening our store was to get a house to live in. When I was searching for a house for us to live in, I met a friend of mine in front of the Buddhist Church. We talked about our situations; when we came back and about the place she was living in. She said, "I finally found my home. Why don't you come visit my place." So I visited here place. It was a very nice apartment and I liked it at one. We decided to live in the apartment temporarily and started the preparation for opening our store. We were lucky enough to find the apartment so easily. "Come to see the place, and if you like it, take it," was her words, and it turned out to be a beautiful place to live in. It was also located at a convenient place.

Q: How long did it take to open the store again?

A: It didn't take time at all to get a place to start our business, although it was a small place. Thus we could prepare for opening our store at once. We didn't have to go back to Salt Lake City where we were holding our jobs. We started our business soon.

Q: What kind of difficulties did you experience when you were preparing to reopen the store? Were you able to secure the goods?

A: Some of them were gone from our storage, but this was no problem at all. Having been doing this business for a long time, we had enough experience and knowledge about how to manage this situation. We could buy some goods from a wholesale dealer if we needed. Thus, we didn't have a hard time. In spite that our store was moved to a smaller place, we could secure our old customers since we had been doing the business for a long time before the war. They knew us and supported our store. This was really fortunate. It would be really hard for a stranger to open a store and secure his regular customers. When we reopened our store, although it was smaller than before, everybody we had known, no matter which race he was, visited us to greet, "Hello, Papa! You have come back!" They were all nice to us, even the Black or Portuguese.

Q: Was the name of the drug store the same as before?

A: Yes. It was "New Eagle Drug Store," and the owner was the same and unchanged. Therefore we didn't have any hard time at all, which was quite different from a stranger who was going to start his business from the beginning. This time, we didn't keep the store so long, because my husband died young.

Q: How many years after the reopening the store was he deceased?

A: When was the war over?

Q: In 1945.

A: We came back to Sacramento in the year when the war was over, and kept our store until 1960.

Q: When did he pass away?

A: He died in 1960. Since he passed away, I handed over the store to somebody else.

Q: Did any church of the white people or the Japanese people help you when you came back here? Didn't you have any contact with a church of the white people?

A: We didn't have so much contact with them in business.

Q: When you came back, a Japanese church had already been built here, hadn't it?

A: Yes. It was called "Hostel". We didn't have any intention to live there, because we knew that it was uncomfortable. This hostel at the Japanese Methodist Church was already full of people. It seemed that they bought army blankets to sleep with, although I didn't go see the place. I thought that I couldn't live in that place since I had my family. At that time, Buddhist Churches and some others opened hostels, and quite a few people were living there temporarily. It was very lucky

of us that we got a place to live in at once and didn't have to go to a hostel.

Q: Issei went through many difficulties, and I think you had chances to hear their difficulties from them. What kind of difficulties did you hear from them?

A: It differs from person to person.

Q: What do you remember? When you talk with Issei, you hear what kind of hardship they experienced, don't you?

A: These days, I don't have so many opportunities to see and talk with them, because the Japanese families are widely scattered. Even when they come over to my place, they have to leave soon because they take Nisei with them. It is also pretty hard to find a person who has experienced the similar difficulties as I have. It is pretty hard, isn't it? I was brought up in a favored family with full of parents' love, not experiencing any hardship. Leaving my home which proved the best place, I came to this country, where my life of hardships started as soon as I arrived. Therefore, I made up my mind that I would never have my children experience any difficulty. My son doesn't know any hardship, and cannot understand hard times I have had. He doesn't take notice of my talk at all, and just

say, "Mon, how well you remember the things of 100 years ago!" He doesn't listen to me. Talking about him who hasn't had a hard time, there is a Japanese proverb, "Kan-nan Hito o Tama ni Suru.(Hardships perfect a man.)" It is a very good thing for human beings to go through hardships. In a sense, it is necessary for men to experience hardship. People who are too favored are not able to understand nor see real things. If I hadn't had him as a relative nor gotten married with him, I would never have come to America nor experienced a foreign life. It was the En (Karma or destiny) I had that made me come to this country.

Q: Mrs. Ishii, you haven't been ill-treated by other people, have you?

A: No, I haven't.

Q: But you have suffered mentally, separated from your parents, and losing your child, haven't you?

A: I grew him up with full of love as a mother... And he died suddenly only because he went to Japan. I parted from him for life. On the other hand, I have been very fortunate since I haven't been disliked by others. Everybody was very nice to me. Although I haven't done good to others, I have evenly done and expressed my true heart to everybody. I have never been hated by anybody.

They all loved me including the white neighbor I have had for dozens of years. Wherever I moved, the people there helped me. I sometimes want to do something for them, but I cannot, living alone, lost the use of my hand and leg. I feel sorry for not able to help them. Anyway, I have been lucky, and everybody was nice to me wherever I lived. But I feel sorry that I am unable to move easily. I cannot drive, either, and I am getting older.

Q: What did your husband die of?

A: It was a disease which 7 out of 10 Issei suffer from. He became unable to excrete and had an operation for it. After this first operation, he got well completely. It was just the time when the Japanese town was gone and we were moving from the 4th Street to the 10th Street that he had the operation. At that time, the Japanese town was gone and we had to move to another place. Putting away our belongings, we took a break before opening our store at the 10th Street. During the break, he had the operation and recuperated himself. After he had completely recovered, we moved to 10th Street. He worked hard at the new place. But one year later, he noticed that his body was getting bad again. He left home, saying, "I'm going to enter hospital to take care of myself before a doctor recommends me to do so." After this second operation, he frequently complained, "I don't feel as good as

before. The result isn't good," and he died.

Q: Did he decease in the hospital?

A: After the operation, I took him back home here from the hospital and took care of him for 4 months.

Q: Were you already living here?

A: Yes, we were. For four months he had been recuperating himself, but in vain. One night, he became unconscious. I was so surprised, sent for a doctore, and sent him to hospital. He could never recover again. After the first operation of excretion, he seemed to recover completely, and opened our store at the 10th Street.

Q: Where did you open it on the 10th Street?

A: We opened it where Osaka-ya is now. We did our business for one year without missing a day.

Q: How old was he when he entered hospital again?

A: He was 70 years old at that time in 1960. He died at the age of 70. 70 is the age for Issei that still can work efficiently. If he hadn't been ill and had been still alive... Mr. Itano is now 86 years old and working in good health. He was 17 years younger than Mr. Itano is.

Q: Kind of hardship was also different from person to person. Some Issei were persecuted or thrown

stones.

A: Is that so? Wherever we lived, whomever we lived among, we have never experienced such a thing.

Q: It was really lucky of you.

A: Yes, we were lucky. Regardless of the difference of races, they greeted us, "Hello , Papa!" "Hello Mama!"

Q: Probably your husband was able to speak English very well. And that's why you haven't experienced any oppression, although I don't know.

A: My husband was a man whom everybody trusted. People freely visited him for prescription before going to a doctor.

Q: Of course, he was very good at English wasn't he?

A: While he was alive, I haven't experienced inconvenience of English at all; reading and writing... Especially I am not good at writing, I had never written a Christmas Card when he was still alive. Now he is gone, I have to do everything which may be a punishment. I feel inconvenience now, having to do everything for myself.

He died in February. In the previous year, in December of the season of writing Christmas Cards, he complained me, writing them which amounted to

not 10, 20 or 100, but to hundreds because of our business, "Mama, I should pass away, doing such a thing." "Papa, when I told you that I was going to write this year even if I wasn't good at writing, you refused it saying, "I can't send it to anyone with your terrible writing on. Therefore you have to suffer now, don't you?" I answered unyieldingly. In this way, he was very good at English, writing and so on.

Q: Being a house-girl in a white family, you can easily listen to English spoken, can't you?

A: I understand English, and also I am able to read written English almost completely. Living by myself, I receive important letters although they seldom come. Reading the context, I throw away those unimportant letters and show the important letters to my son. I am able to comprehend the contexts roughly, but not completely. When I know that the letter is important, I always show it to my son and resolve the problem. I speak broken English. Sometimes, past tense, present tense and future tense, singular and plural are mixed. And I don't use English in daily life. This is my inconvenience.

Q: When did you buy this house?

A: We bought this house in 1949 or 1950.

Q: Were you able to buy a house before the war?

A: No, we didn't buy a house. We rent a house to live in. Then we were relocated.

Q: Had you already bought the store?

A: Yes, we had. After the outbreak of the war, we had to entrust it to a white person. Issei experienced various hardships, always fighting.

Q: As an Issei, what kind of lesson would you like to give to Sansei?

A: My thiniing may be an old one, but I think it would be more convenient for Sansei to have some knowledge of the Japanese language as well as English. Some Nisei don't teach their children Japanese so much. In my opinion, it is to Sansei's interest to know some Japanese, if possible not to mention this country's language--English. Of course, it may be an unreasonable demand for them. Moreover, they have their own idea. They may not be able to do an extra thing.

Q: Do you think it important for Sansei who are American citizens, to be aware of the fact that they are Japanese?

A: Isn't it also important for them to be conscious of the race of their parents, grandparents and their ancestors? There is no denying the fact of being Japanese: the color of the skin will tell. Recognizing this, they also have to grow up to be suitable for this country, America. As long as they grow up in this country as citizens,... It will be pretty hard for them to live in this society...in a crucible of races...

Q: What does it mean?

A: Don't Sansei have a sense that they are in a Crucible of races any more?

Q: Do you think it is a good thing to be conscious that we are of Japanese race from generations to generation?

A: Well, it depends on circumstances. But it is a good thing, and not a bad thing at a-1, to let Sansei or Yonsei realize this fact through the way of telling them that their ancestors' were Japanese.

Q: You went through many hardships, experiencing things, and here you are now. That means you are a person who has experience and know what young people don't. What would you like to teach them about life? Some lessons gained by your

experience. which you think important to tell them.

A: Respecting the other people, admiring the elders, and believing in God are the things I think important.

Q: How about experiencing hardships, which you have mentioned before?

A: "Kan-nan Hito O Tama ni Suru", which means hardships polish a human being like a precious jewel.

Q: Do you think this is also a lesson in life?

A: Yes, I do. If a person made a good use of his hardships, he could be a better person. It is no good to think the hardships as awful things he would never want to talk about. We should made a good use of them in our life. It depends on our mind. Some think of their hardships good lessons to their life and polish themselves, some never want to hear of hardships because they would never want to experience them again. It really depends on people's mind, and hard to handle this.

But you know more about these things since you have been doing this questionnaire interviews at various places. You must know so many men's experiences.

Q: We can't do this to everybody, it's impossible. What was the most useful lesson you had learned

from your mother?

A: It was "To love people." As there was such words in English taught at Sunday School, "Be kind to one another." This thought can be used universally, "the spirit of love".

Q: Did your mother use the word ai (love)?

A: No, she didn't, since she was a person of old times. My father was born in Meiji 1 (1868) and mother in Meiji 3 (1870). Or maybe it was my mother who was born in Meiji 1, and father in Keio (the previous era from Meiji). Anyway one of them was born in Meiji 1. Therefore she was such a woman of old times, and didn't use the word ai in her talk. But she was a truly tender mother. She was a person who never express her bad feeling to others, which is very difficult to do. I could never follow her way. When I didn't like the thing, I at once express it on my face or to somewhere. She was well-trained in that matter. Maybe that's because my father was such a person -- silent and always having guests. Women in those days were very patient. They didn't express their will. To serve their husband was their duty, and she was kind to his guest. Being the oldest daughter, I was frequently asked to help her.

Q: Women have been made work very hard and their social status has been low, but today the movement to raise women's status in society to equal to men's

is now prevailing. What do you think about this?

A: To treat women equally? Is it different from the Women's Lib?

Q: Well, very similar to that... There are many types of these movements... Didn't you feel that your mother worked much harder than your father?

A: Well, women in those days considered it as their duty to work earnestly for their home and children with love. Therefore, I didn't think of it in this way.

Q: Japanese women didn't think of their pleasure nor study at all, did they?

A: No, they, living in a rural home, were unable to afford such things. They were kept busy all day long; when a guest came, they had to entertain them, cook a dinner for them and so on. They couldn't find such extra time to spare for pleasure and study.

Q: But you, as an Issei, were able to do such things, weren't you? Such as flower arrangement and tanka.

A: Yes, I was. Also I didn't have so many children, so I didn't have to spare so much time for household affairs. The woman who is growing up 4 or 5 children would never be able to do such things extra. Thus, I had a lot of spare time for myself. I was able to go to school part-time, I was also

able to attend a class to study for getting citizenship.

Q: What kind of person was your husband, Ichiro?

A: He was truly a sincere person. He never said nice things nor saved appearances. He was a man of a true heart. Besides that, he was a gifted person with a lot of abilities. He liked to paint pictures, and even went to an Art School. He was a wise man, and liked to create things. In Topaz, where we were living in a Camp, a lot of shellfish were found. Most women there were doing shellwork, making flowers out of shells. I have never made anything, instead, my husband did this all. We used to send these beautiful broaches of shellworks as a souvenir to our close friends who were living outside the Camp. He was so skillful that he made various pretty flowers, creating for himself. He was also good at coloring them. It was an art. I didn't have such artistic skills such as painting. Anyway, he was very good at these artistic things unlike his looks. He never experienced a feeling of loneliness. Although he had to make up a prescription for customers, whenever he didn't have a customer, he was always doing something of his hobbies. So he was also rich in mind. Doing the business of one-man boss, he knew very well that he couldn't participate in social activities.

In a drug store, a registered pharmacist should be there all the time. In the case that a pharmacist was out when an inspector came, you would be punished. Therefore he wasn't allowed to go out any place, since he was the only pharmacist at the store not hiring any registered one. He knew well that he couldn't participate in social service like the other men could. And I understood this situation very well, I did almost everything that I could do socially. Otherwise he couldn't open the store. If I was in the store instead of him and an inspector came, we would be punished. We had such a strict regulation in keeping a drug store. Therefore, He was doing what he could do within the circumstance. He had a lot of hobbies that kept him away from feeling lonely. Since he liked to paint pictures very much, he went to an Art School while he was in the Camp.

Q: Is that picture painted by him?

A: No, this is a picture by my former teacher in Japan, and won a prize in the Tei-ten exhibition, (Artists' Society in Japan, supposed to be one of the highest level). My father sent this from Japan.

Q: How about the picture over there on the wall?

A: That's not what my husband painted, either. Anyway, this picture was painted by my former teacher who

was a member of Tei-ten, and won a prize. The close we look from here, the more alive the painted carp looks. If you didn't look close, you couldn't notice that. Since my husband liked painting, I have quite a few pictures. Living alone, having no place to put on, I put them away somewhere and don't change them any more. Too many pictures on the wall is too much and looks messy.

Q: Do you have some old books published long time ago?

A: No, I don't. We disposed them all when we relocated to the Camp, being afraid of inspection. To think about this now, it was the most ridiculous thing. Therefore, I don't have any. Besides, young people can't read the books written in Japanese. That's just too much trouble to keep them.

Q: What else would you like to talk about your husband?

A: No. Since he was too sincere, I don't have any particular thing to talk about.

Q: Has he ever scolded you?

A: No, not so often. Noticing that he was mad, I always kept silence, pretending as if I didn't hear. So we didn't proceed further enough to fight. Generally, he was understanding and easy to get

along with. We were lucky in this case. He understood my uselessness and did almost everything for himself trying not to ask me to do hard things.

I, myself, let him do things, thinking I had better depend on him since he was willing to.

That's our way.

Q: When did you go back to Japan, and how many times?

A: My husband was able to visit Japan only once. I, myself, visited Japan only once 9 years ago, three years after my husband's death, for the first time since I came to this country.

Q: Had your parents already been deceased?

A: Yes, I went back to Japan after their death.

Before that, as an Issei, I had been busy fighting hard against hardships for my living and my children, thus couldn't afford it.

Q: You haven't had difficulty financially, have you?

A: Although we didn't have much money, we didn't have to face such financial difficulties anyhow. We were fortunate in this matter. We couldn't become wealthy, but we didn't have to suffer either from such poverty that we didn't have money for tomorrow's bread.

Q: Do you remember about Rev. Junzo Nakamura? What

kind of person was he?

A: Yes, I remember. He was a minister of the Presbyterian Church and engaged in missionary work very hard together with his wife. In the daytime, he opened an English Conversation class for the Japanese people, and his wife also taught us. For those Japanese who just got to America, it was more useful to attend this class than ordinary schools, since they used both English and Japanese in teaching. Issei used to attend the class. He was a fine minister. His wife also preached Christianity very hard. Ministers, in those days, didn't have a car and used to walk to visit people. It was that Presbyterian Church that I first went to in order to learn English while I was a school girl at the white family.

Q: In those days, there were still gambling places and whorehouses in Sacramento, weren't there?

A: I imagine so, such restaurants (Ryoriya)...

Q: Was Ryoriya such a place?

A: It was a place where people went to eat and drink. Those who worked in the country and earned some money usually went to those places to enjoy. Some didn't go to such a place and aimed at a higher place, saving the money. In this area, they used to produce various things and farming was popular.

People used to go to the country to work on farms. They came to such a place to drink when they earned money, I imagine. I don't know so much about this, since I didn't have to do with the business.

There used to be a Japanese Town in Sacramento and prospering in various business.

Rev. it must be a hard task to do this project.

Are you going to publish this?

Q: Yes, if possible. We are going to have this translated into English and show it to Sansei and Yonsei. In order to do this, we need your signature of agreement...